

N340 Cover Crops- Pilot Practice

Purpose

Provide operators an incentive to encourage the adoption of cover crops for reducing soil erosion, improving water quality and soil health.

Applicability

Applies to no-till cropland acres where row crops are grown and a cover crop management system is not currently being implemented.

Erosion Requirements

Practice has no erosion requirements.

Specifications

The completed components of the practice must meet the NRCS Standards and Specifications for Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Residue and Tillage Management No-Till (329) and Cover Crop (340) contained in the Field Office Technical Guide.

Policies

1. Contracted acres must currently be in a minimum of a 2 species primary crop rotation.
2. Primary crop preceding and following the cover crop must have been planted using a no-till method on the contract acres. No-till is defined as per standard 329 for Residue and Tillage Management No-Till.
3. Only fall seeded cover crops are eligible.
4. Payment can be issued after no-till planting of the primary crop into the (terminated) cover crop or after May 25 if the primary crop has not yet been planted.
5. Cooperators must adopt cover crops in compliance with the **Cover Crop (340)** standard as part of this practice. In addition:
 - a. All cover crop mixes must include at least 25% cool-season annual grass or small grain component. (Caution should be taken when selecting Annual Ryegrass for a cover crop mix.)
 - b. Cover crops will be left undisturbed until just prior to the planting of the primary crop.
 - c. Cover crops **cannot** be grazed or mechanically harvested.
 - d. Fall seeded cover crops may be terminated:
 1. by frost,
 2. prior to production of viable seed,
 3. no more than two weeks prior to seeding the primary crop
 - e. Tillage as a means of killing the cover crop is not an option.
 - f. N595 Pest Management cannot be used solely to terminate the cover crop.

6. Operators applying for annual cover crop funds will be prioritized by the district using a ranking sheet for cost-share funding. (See attached Cover Crop Pilot Practice Ranking Sheet). The SWCD can customize the ranking sheet for their specific needs in different areas by using the optional five questions developed by the district. Ranking sheet and seeding rates using AGRON 22 documentation must be scanned into MoSWIMS as supporting documentation.

7. *Cost-share is authorized:*

a. For incentive payments for operators (including landowner-operators) who implement all required components of the Cover Crop Pilot practice.

8. *Cost-share is not authorized for:*

a. Pasture or hay land

Maximum State Cost-Share

1. Operators participating in the Cover Crop Pilot practice will be eligible for an incentive payment of \$30/acre/year.

2. Cost-share assistance for this pilot practice shall not be approved for more than 20 acres per operator. Operators cannot sign up multiple landowners to elude the commission's limit. Operators currently or previously enrolled in a cover crop practice through a federal or other assistance program shall not be eligible for the pilot Cover Crop practice cost-share assistance.

Map Requirements

A map that displays the completed practice must be scanned and attached as "Map Document" in MoSWIMS prior to contract payment submission.

Technical Responsibilities

Technical staff has the responsibility for determining the need for the practice, for design of the practice based upon the minimum extent necessary, and to certify that the completed practice meets NRCS standards and specifications within commission policy.

Acres Served

Acreage planted in cover crops

Extent Installed

Acres

Maintenance Life

This practice is completed upon contract payment therefore the contract will not have a maintenance life.